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Northwestern Division

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Public Affairs Office
Tel: (503) 808-3710

Email: cenwd-pa@usace.army.mil
FAX: (503) 808-3713

<https://www.nwd.usace.army.mil>
P.O. Box 2870 Portland OR 97208-2870

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Contact: Clare Perry 503-806-6591 (cell)

Corps fish program may get 18% increase in '03

Portland, Ore. – Salmon recovery efforts in the Pacific Northwest will get an extra boost under the President's proposed budget for the Corps Columbia River salmon restoration program in fiscal year 2003.

"The budget requested for our fish program is a vote of confidence in the region's progress in restoring salmon populations," said Brig. Gen. David A. Fastabend, Commander, Northwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "A \$20 million increase over current year funding will help us build on our recent successes, reflected in an upward trend in adult fish returns and improved survival rates of juvenile fish."

The President's budget requests \$128 million for structural and operational improvements and studies to further enhance fish passage and survival in the Columbia-Snake river system, an 18 percent increase over FY02.

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FishBudget 2-2-2-2

Of the total, the Columbia River Fish Mitigation Project (CRFM), a n effort to evaluate, design and construct fish passage improvements at eight mainstem dams, would receive \$98 million. A key component to be funded, at \$32 million in FY 03, is a surface bypass system for juvenile fish at the Bonneville Second Powerhouse. The CRFM project would include some 65 other regionally supported passage improvement efforts, such as testing of spillway surface bypass at Lower Granite Dam, improving adult fishways at The Dalles Dam, and research, monitoring and evaluation.

Another \$2 million is targeted for initial restoration work in the Lower Columbia River estuary where there is significant potential to improve salmon survival. The only new construction start for the Corps nationwide, the Lower Columbia Ecosystem Restoration Project is a cooperative effort among federal agencies, states, and local entities.

Operations and Maintenance funding of \$16.8 million would provide for routine maintenance of adult and juvenile fish bypass systems, including backlog. An additional \$5.2 million is requested for other studies on habitat actions for salmon to be carried out in the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan; an ecosystem study of the Walla Walla River watershed; and an evaluation of the Lower Columbia River estuary. More than \$6 million has been requested for continuing construction of temperature control facilities at the Corps' Cougar Lake project in central Oregon.

Details of the Corps FY 2003 Civil Works budget request can be viewed at www.usace.army.mil.